

-Meeting Summary-

January 24, 2011 - (12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m., January 24, 2011, by Dr. Richard Norgaard, Chair of the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB), and Lauren Hastings, Deputy Executive Officer for the Delta Science Program. Eight members of the Delta Independent Science Board were present on the call for the meeting: Brian Atwater, Tracy Collier, Michael Healey, Jeffrey Mount, Richard Norgaard, Vince Resh, and John Wiens. Ed Houde and Judy Meyer were absent from the teleconference.

After calling the meeting to order, members of the public were asked to introduce themselves. The following people responded:

Members of the Public on the call: Jeff Willit, City of Stockton; Maureen Martin, Contra Costa Water District; Valerie Connor, State and Federal Water Contractors; Erwin Haydoc, Citizen; G. Fred Lee of G. Fred Lee and Associates; Matt Layan, Coalition for a Sustainable Delta; Erin Forsman, USEPA; Diana Engle, Larry Walker and Associates working for the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD); Kurt Ohlinger, SRCSD; Chris Carr, State Water Resources Water Quality Control Board; and Erin Chappelle, California Department of Water Resources.

Delta Science Program Staff on the call: Marina Brand, Lauren Hastings, Cliff Dahm, and Elizabeth Soderstrom

Introduction

Chair Norgaard welcomed participants, and noted that written comments had been received by Joshua Israel and Ken Newman who were unable to attend in person. Norgaard stated that public comment would be at the end of the teleconference. No new conflicts, or need for disclosures had arisen for the Board. After explaining the development and editorial process to-date, he opened the discussion for comments on the Memo.

2. Finalize and Approve Report for Submittal to the Delta Stewardship Council (action)

The following are the major points regarding revisions and edits that Delta ISB members agreed should be made to the Memo, Attachment 1, and Attachment 2 (Table):

Memo

- Add a fifth point that describes the importance of developing and using an adaptive management framework. Vice-Chair Healey agreed to draft the language for this.

- Add a section to the first bullet that includes Mount's point about there not being compelling evidence that only a few stressors are responsible for the decline in fish species in the Delta. Compelling evidence that mitigating a few stressors would likely result in a rapid recovery of these fishes have not been seen.
- Edit the fifth point so that it expresses the support of greater integration of Delta Science.
- Clarify the fourth point so that it is not so cryptic or meld it into the third point.
- Change the numbered points in the memo to bullets and then highlight these in the supporting documents.
- Label the Memo as "Key Points" or "Executive Summary."
- Keep the Memo to 1-2 pages and reference the rest of the material as attachments.
- Make all the main points using the same command/recommendation language; they are currently mixed.

Attachment 1

- The supporting material will consist of two attachments (supporting material and table), the reference to a longer report will be removed from the text, and the Delta ISB will consider the possibility of preparing a longer report at the next meeting.
- Regarding the first point, need to add the language from the memo related to Mount's point about multiple stressors.
- In the second point, take out the language stating "stressors act upon the objective."
- Add a lead-in sentence for the third point; do not just start with "For example."
- Collier suggested including information about the impossibility of identifying only a few key stressors, that this situation is not unique to the Delta, and that reference to prioritizing stressors should be removed. All web addresses will be put as footnotes.
- The fourth point will be redrafted so that it first focuses on terminology and then the information regarding conceptual models will be put in a separate section.
- In the first portion of the fifth point, Black Brant example will be replaced with Sandhill Crane, and "human" will be added to population growth rate.
- In the second portion of the fifth point, replace stressor with drivers when appropriate, and remove the word "big".
- Healey will change the language around adaptive management in the sixth point and clarify "serial change."
- The seventh point will come after the eighth point and the title will be changed to "integrate Delta science."
- The last paragraph in point eight that starts with "All members of the Delta ISB" will be removed.

Table (Attachment 2)

- Norgaard will revise the table based on written comments mostly from Houde, Resh and Meyer which will focus on wording.
- Need to work on the version that was posted on Friday.
- Remove numbers under type and replace with language about each type.

3. Public Comment (For matters that were not on the agenda, but within subject matter jurisdiction of the Delta ISB.)

1. Maureen Martin, Contra Costa Water District: Recommended that the numbering should be eliminated to prevent the reader from assuming that the numbers denote prioritization.

Delta ISB Response: The numbering will be removed.

2. Valerie Connor, State and Federal Water Contractors: Indicated the need to establish goals but would like the Delta ISB to focus on those actions that should be taken now and the stressors that might be associated with them. She also asked how this memo will civilize the discussion around stressors such as species extinctions and levee failures and stated that the water contractors disagree with the primary conclusion that there is not an approach to prioritize stressors. She further indicated that the water contractors provided an approach that they think works and would like feedback on that approach in hopes that will civilize the discussion.

Delta ISB Response: Species extinction and levee failure were considered in their partial list of stressors, but they also felt that the coequal goals were not elaborated enough. The Delta ISB also noted that the POD report addressed those critical species and still did not develop specific actions. The Delta ISB concluded that these were very important questions that would be tabled for further discussion.

3. Erwin Haydoc, Citizen: Stated that the Black Brant was called out because of its importance to estuaries, that there will be changes to the Delta that can be predicted by considering alternative scenarios, and that he liked the idea of adaptive management. He also noted that there are multiple factors at work in the Delta, that the system has gone from reasonably healthy to near collapse, and that the key stressors in the Delta are water flow and salinity changes. As a result, he does not understand why everything needs to be put on equal footing. In his view, the stressors are renewable but limited runoff, stochastic runoff and inflows, mass and energy equilibrium, the continuum of the ecosystem, and biochemical tolerance. He further noted that many studies done in the '70s and 80s showed that flow and salinity are major stressors, and he did not understand why the Council does not view those two factors as overarching enablers of a viable Delta.

Delta ISB Response: Those two stressors are included in the list, discussed in the supporting material, and highlighted in the examples.

4. Diana Engle, Larry Walker and Associates working for the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District: Wanted the Delta ISB to be sure that the title on the table clearly defines the categories (1-4).

Delta ISB Response: The numbers will be dropped entirely, they will make sure the headings are correct, and that the correct table is used.

Conclusion

Chair Norgaard and Vice-Chair Healey summarized the proposed changes outlined above. Mount made a motion to accept the memo and attachments based on the proposed changes. Collier seconded the motion. All present Delta ISB members voted in favor of the motion.

Public Comment on Items not on Agenda

Comment 1: Erwin Haydoc, Citizen: Stated that Phil Isenberg has been great about telling scientists that they need to give policy relevant information and the scientists have been great at responding. He thanked them for their efforts.

4. Preparation for next Delta ISB meeting

Mount asked Hastings if the Delta ISB was going to be seeing a first draft of the Delta Plan by the end of this month and would they be reviewing it? Hastings responded that the first draft of the Plan will posted on February 14 and the Delta ISB has a conference call scheduled on Friday, February 18 to divide up review duties and assign sections for review. It was determined that the conference call would occur from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 PST. The meeting was adjourned by Chair Norgaard.

5. Adjourn